Gillette marketing strategies

In this marketing course, you'll gain an understanding of the foundations, scope, and challenges of global marketing, as well as the cultural environments of global markets. Organizations and companies are always facing new challenges, including slow domestic market growth, international competition, deregulation of previously protected industries, short product lifecycles, and the emergence of global brands. This course will equip you with skills to understand and deal with current and development challenges in global marketing and how to create and implement successful strategies. This course will help you understand the strategic implications of segmentation, targeting, and positioning, and how they are developed within the context of customer, competitor, and context analysis. Special emphasis will be placed on the role of disruptive positioning strategies and how companies can use such strategies to their advantage. You will develop integrated marketing strategies taking into account marketing problems and perspectives across national borders and within foreign countries. You'll learn how to evaluate and prioritize information that influences marketing decisions and handle ambiguous information when involved in business globally. You will also learn about the strategic implications of the Country of Origin Effect and how it influences the processing of information from companies and brands of the client. Assess and build economic, functional, experiential and social value or a combination within the complex and dynamic political/legal, economic, technological, cultural and other environmental forces that managers face in the global arena To clarify the scope and challenges of global marketing To assess the impact of external forces on global marketing decisions to develop a disruptive positioning strategy for a company that is struggling to differentiate itself from competition Awareness of alternative market entry strategies. Receive a certificate signed by the instructor with the institution logo to verify its achievement and increase your job prospectsFrom the certificate to your CV or resume, or post it directly on LinkedInGive yourself an additional incentive to complete the EdX course, a non-profit organization, relies on verified certificates to help fund free education for all globally, students from one or more of the following countries or regions will not be able to enroll for this course: Iran, Cuba and the Crimea region of Ukraine. Although EDX has sought licenses from the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to offer our courses to students from these countries and regions, the licenses we receive are not broad enough to allow us to offer this course at all EdX really regrets that U.S. sanctions prevent us from offering all of our courses to everyone, no matter where they they are Product prices must comply with industry and category levels. However, depending on quality, features and benefits, and even a unique sale proposal manufactured through advertising, a product can be priced in the highest price range of the category. There are a number of prevailing pricing strategies used in marketing. From product to product, one or more of these pricing strategies can come into play during the life cycle of a product. A product that has a demonstrated benefit or attribute on other products of the same category can be priced well above the prevailing price rates. Tide laundry detergent is a product in the laundry detergent segment. Liquid Tide can cost almost 10 times the amount of other branded detergent products, such as Arm & Hammer or Gain, for the same amount of product. For decades, Maré made numerous improvements to the product, and heavy advertising spending communicated its superiority over competitors and justified its position as a price leader. Combining a competitive price is a tactic used by marketers to take away the issue of table price. This tactic is used by a company that can be stronger competitively in other features and benefits. The price combination puts a competitor on the defensive. The gasoline industry sets the price based on the price of crude oil primarily. However, from block to block, there will be price matching and even price wars between local competitors. A product can reduce the price with the recognition that it is in a difficult position against a strong competitor and the only way to compete is to lose money with the price, but to make up the volume sold. This is known as price underpricing. With this strategy, unit sales volume becomes the measurement of market success instead of dollar sales volume. The goal here is to compensate for the perceived loss from a lower price with growth in unit sales from an attractive price, which creates higher demand and therefore higher total dollar volume. Another pricing strategy is to sell a product at such a low price that the company loses money with each purchase. This strategy is usually a short-term strategy that the product employs to create demand for itself or another company product that sells in the same product category. A bread maker can price your jam as a lost leader and charge a premium for your peanut butter. The perception of customers is that both products have a good price, although one may be significantly above competitors' prices. This pricing strategy is employed when the goal is to move product units without taking into account the price. This is a often used by stores that are closing or when new seasonal merchandise is due in the store, but current stocks of last season's products have not been sold. Marketing strategies should be combined elements of the study of demographic, competitive, pricing, promotion, promotion, and sales support. The goal is to offer a revolutionary product that offers people a new experience. Effective marketers use the study of demographics to increase the visibility and profitability of their products. Demographics study segments of the population that analyze factors such as age, income, gender, and purchasing preferences. You must study the competition to have an effective marketing strategy. Study of similar products are already on the market and evaluate their successes and failures. The pricing strategy must be competitive while maintaining profitability factors. Prices should be in line with the big brands, but a little less expensive. Promotion involves push and pull strategies. Impulse strategies create customer demand by introducing products to the public. Attraction strategies require high spending on advertising and consumer promotion. You get product visibility by choosing an advertising media vehicle that will provide the most exposure possible to your product. Some media vehicles are television, radio, newspapers, magazines, outdoor advertising and Internet advertising. The Walt Disney Company claims to do intensive research to learn about its target market, allowing it to take advantage of growth opportunities on a global level. Disney corporate employees say they are committed to staying up to date with the technologies kids use, with shows they're watching, and how they incorporate technology into their lives. For example, Disney offers advertising discounts on Twitter and games on Facebook. It ensures that its licensed characters like Mickey Mouse and Spider-Man are advancing to new platforms. Demonstrating its leadership in marketing to reach children and families, Disney unveiled the first national wireless service in 2006, known as Disney MobileSM. The phone used GPS features to allow parents to control who their children communicate with and monitor where they are. This is part of Disney's strategy of being relevant to the contemporary family lifestyle. Disney also continues to appeal to teens and their parents, keeping up to date with digital games and social media opportunities, such as the acquisition of online social gaming leader Playdom Inc. According to small business strategist DAMC, Disney recognizes that many people don't have the opportunity to travel to the United States to visit Walt Disney World or Disneyland. As a result, Disney has developed theme parks around the world to capture the market, adapting them to local cultures. They include Disneyland Paris, Tokyo Disney and Hong Kong Disneyland. With global expansion, Disney aims to grow its market and expand its brand. Disney's ownership of media networks ABC, Disney Channel and ESPN is a strategy that the company is using to market its brand to Americans. This includes a systematic approach to television advertising, as well as commercials, printouts, outdoor advertising and mobile initiatives, promoting discounts on resorts and family packages. To get to teens, Disney has launched advergaming, which places ad messages in online and video games. The goal is to reach the children directly and encourage them to urge their parents to visit a Disney park for a family experience. As part of its marketing strategy, Disney believes in innovation to stay ahead of the competition and build business. With rapid technological advances, the traditional audience of passive television is in transition, no longer captive to prime-time programming in major networks. Disney's strategy is to connect directly with children through storytelling using multiple technologies. Marketing literature is full of research and analysis to help managers develop market-tailored marketing strategies. However, when it comes to implementing these strategies, the literature is silent and the self-help books ring hollow. What senior management needs in the 1980s are not new answers to questions about strategy, but greater attention to marketing practice, to the signs of good marketing management that drive smart strategies to successful results in the market. The objectives of this article are to explain and assist in the diagnosis and resolution of marketing implementation problems, catalog common problems of translation of marketing strategies in management acts and recommend tactics to increase the effectiveness of marketing practices. The examples and conclusions are drawn from a three-year clinical research program I conducted to start a course on marketing implementation at Harvard Business School (see insert for details of this study). The data in this article originated from a project of course development and research on marketing implementation. Although I'm still conducting the research, I've compiled 35 case studies on marketing practice issues to date. All examples of the article, with one exception, are extracted directly from these cases. They cover a variety of sizes and types of the company. The cases fall into the four structural categories that I outlined in the article. Some cases illustrate low-level functional marketing issues, such as how Hertz can retreat from its mileage-free pricing scheme, never, if it becomes appropriate. Others show problems at the program level with regard to the synergistic combination of marketing functions to bring to market a particular product or sell a special segment. The main account management cases are a major concern here. There are cases of marketing systems, where management is troubled or concerned about who has (or do not have) available to target and control marketing effort. And, there are cases about marketing policy guidelines, formal or formal policies by which management tries to target all marketings I've collected many cases on marketing and leadership. One of the reasons I started a course on marketing implementation was that top executives often complained to me that newly minted MBAs are usually great strategists, but they can't organize a three-car funeral when it comes to running marketing plans in the field. The results of the course teaching for three years indicate that an effective implementation in marketing can be taught. The results of the research project indicate that the marketing practice is as worthy of detailed attention of management and academic study as the formulation of strategy. It's invariably easier to think about smart marketing strategies than to make them work under constraints from businesses, competitors, and customers. Consider a pipe company that invented a new type of triangular pipe 180% more efficient than the existing line, needing only two-thirds of the material. Based on value for users, the new vice president of marketing wanted to price the new high pipe. He feared, however, that the lack of support from other major managers, the company's marketing systems and sales force would hinder its strategy. Everything three generations of managers have learned about doing business in this market, all that the company is, complained, seems to conspire against me being able to introduce this innovation correctly. What to do — the marketing strategy — is clear to this vice president: price according to value, encourage cannibalization of existing lines and reap profits. How to accomplish the strategy -- marketing implementation -- is problematic. This family business typically produced pipes in large quantities and sold it in a low-margin growth market. The company started every year with high margins, but because of competitive pressure and the need to keep its plants in capacity, it ended up cutting costs in the heat of the sales season. Plant managers were paid based on the pipe produced per minute. The sales force thought about cutting list prices to stimulate orders and secure commissions. Senior management encouraged this commodity-oriented culture by setting budgets with high fixed costs and maintaining a measurement system designed to track the selling price of each unit of raw material instead of the tube itself. The vice president was rightly concerned that simply declaring a high price on the new tube by Fiat or even building a marketing program for innovation would be ineffective in combating the entrenched and commodity-focused way of doing business. As this example suggests, problems in marketing practice have two components: structural and human. The structure includes the company's marketing functions, such as pricing and sales, as well as any program based on these functions, any control systems, and policy guidelines. The second second are the people themselves, the managers in charge of doing the marketing work. Strategy or Implementation? Marketing strategy and implementation affect each other. While the strategy obviously affects actions, execution also affects marketing strategies, especially over time. Despite the diffuse boundary between strategy and execution, it is not difficult to diagnose marketing implementation problems and distinguish them from strategy deficiencies. When a 50-person computer terminal sales force sells only 39 of the company's new line of smart microcomputers during a sales blitz in which sales of more than 500 units were predicted, is the problem with sales force management or the switching strategy for smart machines? The question is answerable. Intense competition is eroding sales margins at its old dumb terminals. In addition, the smart terminal category is expected to grow by more than 500% during the 1980s. The new product, a portable microcomputer with built-in printer and memory, has many benefits that the target market values. But as sales reps already earn an average of more than $50,000 a year, they have little incentive to struggle with an unknown new product. Management has also inexplicably established compensation for sales incentives on new machines lower than older ones. Finally, the old terminals have a sales cycle half the time than the new ones and do not require software knowledge or support. Here's a case where poor execution stifles good strategy. The Exhibition shows how marketing strategy and implementation are affect. The computer example falls into the bottom-left cell of the array and illustrates an important rule about strategy and implementation: poor implementation can disguise a good strategy. As the exhibition indicates, when both strategy and implementation are on target, the company has done everything it can to ensure success. Similarly, when the strategy is inadequate and implementation is poor, implementation deficiencies can mask problems with the strategy; not only is the likely outcome, but such failures will be especially intractable due to the difficulty in identifying the cause of the problem. Exposure Marketing Strategy and diagnosis of implementation problems When the strategy is appropriate, but the implementation is bad or vice versa, the diagnosis becomes complicated. Poor marketing execution can cause management to doubt even solid strategies because they are masked by implementation inadequacies (the bottom left cell of the exposure). As the previous computer company example suggests, management can accelerate market failure if it then changes its strategy. I labeled this situation as the problematic cell in the matrix because poor execution makes it difficult to confirm the right of the strategy and can cause unnecessary changes. When the strategy is inadequate and the execution excellent (the top top management usually takes the time to recognize and correct your strategic mistakes. Good branch heads, for example, are known to modify potentially disastrous head office guidelines. In fact, some companies that are known for excellent marketing execution, such as Frito-Lay, expect such modifications from their managers. But at other times, the good execution of a bad strategy acts like the engine of an airplane in a nose —accelerates the accident. Because it is difficult to predict the outcome of an inadequate strategy coupled with good execution, I label this cell of rescue or ruin. From this analysis, two points stand out to help managers diagnose marketing implementation problems. First, poor execution tends to mask both the adequacy and the inadequacy of the strategy. Therefore, when not sure of the causes of poor marketing performance, managers should look at marketing practices before making strategic adjustments. Careful examination of issues, implementations, can often identify a guilty of execution responsible for seemingly strategic problems. Structural Problems of Marketing Practice In his book Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, Robert Pirsig proposes a catalogue of pitfalls that can dodge the mechanic's determination to do quality work. It tells, for example, how a five-cent screw holding an access cap in place can, if trapped, render a $4,000 motorcycle useless and the mechanic a frustrated wreck going for truly serious mistakes. Like mechanics, managers need a catalogue of pitfalls in marketing practice. In the following sections, I take on the problems and pitfalls of each level, or place, in the structural hierarchy of marketing practice: functions, programs, systems, and policy guidelines. Next, I discuss the implementation skills required of those who are doing marketing. Functions: Fundamental Marketing functions include sales, commercial promotion and distributor management. These low-level tasks are the fundamentals, blocking and coping with the trader's work. However, I noticed that most companies and their managers have great difficulty with these tasks. Often, the difficulty stems from a failure to pursue the fundamentals of marketing in some determined way, because when a CEO doubted that the company's fair spending was a good marketing communication device, but continued to authorize $1 million each year thinking the company had to be there. Although the peculiar pitfalls for each function are worthy of a separate article, there are some management problems common to everyone. Problems with marketing functions often outweigh the problems in the marketing, systems and policy levels. Managers often have problems with sales force management, distributor management, or price movements. When functions go wrong, it is often because the sedema simply simply that the function in question will be well performed by someone else else, and thus ignores it until a crisis intervenes. In a company, for example, management decided to offer low list prices with correspondingly low discounts on list prices. In doing what it thought was a solid price move for its line of graphics computers, however, management did not take into account how prices were implemented. The pricing scheme that resulted did not satisfie anyone because buyers proved its effectiveness by the size of the discounts received. Thus, the implementation problems at the role level are mainly caused by faulty managerial assumptions or, as they say in the sports world, by not keeping an eye on the ball. As expected, this disease is more prevalent in large operating units, where administrators have functional experts to trust, than in small ones. A second cause of marketing function problems is structural contradiction. A highly promising start-up business with $600,000 in revenue decided after careful deliberation to expand its home distribution network, installing -- at great cost -- its own sales offices. The goal was to control their distribution channels. For international distribution, however, management was divided between its need for control and its ignorance with international markets. The conflict escalated when a potential foreign partner said it would secure $30 million in sales. Management was perplexed. His policy dictated that he should have foreign channels, but the implementation was beyond his capabilities. Cash flow needs eventually entised the company to decide on foreign indirect distribution, with a different partner and arrangement in each country. The overall result was a complicated patchwork of direct and indirect distribution, which the thin ranks of executives could not cope. Management's attempts to balance the contradiction between the desired control policies and the distribution structure at the functional level were ineffective and led to conflicts between company executives and foreign distributors. And a third cause of trouble is when the office doesn't choose a marketing function for special concentration and competence and instead takes satisfaction in doing a proper job with each one —what I call global mediocrity. Thus, employees spread resources and administrative talents democratically, but ineffective. Typically, the functions of pricing, advertising, promotion and distribution are satisfactory, but no function is excellent. The best companies have a facility to handle one or two marketing functions and are competent in the rest. No is good at everything, but the most capable focus on doing an excellent job in some marketing functions. Frito-Lay is an example of a company that refined two functional functional and distribution — the heights that serve as the company's marketing base. Gillette's Personal Care Division does an advertising science. Both companies allocate resources, often unevenly, to maintain competitive preeminence in showcase functions. Programs: The Right Combination A marketing program is a combination of marketing and non-marketing functions, such as sales promotion and production, for a particular product or market. Marketing programs are a basic reference point for analysis of marketing practices; from them, it is possible to look down at the functions that comprise the programs or even the systems and policies that drive the execution of the programs. At the program level, management seeks to mix marketing and non-marketing functions in an attempt to sell a particular product line or penetrate a target segment. Managing all aspects of the Silkience hair conditioner line is an example of a marketing program; as well as manage a company's key accounts and special needs. If the functions are blocking and coping with execution, marketing programs are the primer showing how customers will be courted and competition confused. A computer vendor, for example, wanted to install a national accounts program to better serve its small but growing number of key accounts. The seller recruited a respected national account manager from another company, gave him a secretary, and issued a presidential mandate to put together a program of key accounts. Exactly how was this done? Perhaps the manager should try to create a dedicated national account sales force, despite the risks that competition with the vice president of sales, his supervisor, entailed. Or was he better at work on a dotted line capability through the company's sales managers, not trying any sales or service coordination beyond simple interfunctional persuasion, and taking different risks with the customer base? The art of mixing functions in programs is, at best, misunderstood, often left to learn at work by trial and error. A common problem of the program stems from what I call empty promise marketing, which results from the establishment of programs that are either contradicted by the identity of the company or are beyond its functional capabilities. The computer graphics company alluded to previously made a generalized computer equipment that served all segments of the industry, but most buyers were small users of a single site. In fact, with the exception of your national account manager, all implementation actions and policy policy directed the company to small customers. Unlike many companies that get 80% of the of the top 20% of its customers, this company received only 30% of its revenues from its large accounts. In a way, the national business account program was against the company was created to do in marketing. The program was an empty promise internally and for the market. In another case, the country's largest producer of private-brand lamps decided it had to give its lamps a brand and put them on supermarket shelves to anticipate others from an attack on its lucrative core business. The company, which specializes in industrial lighting products, had no experience in consumer marketing or advertising and only a little in important areas of retail, such as commercial promotion. However, you created Project Shopping Cart. After spending several million dollars to design a new screen and packaging for the lamps and even more to sponsor sporting events and recruit a number of brokers to put the bulbs on, management has amassed a 0.3% market share in two years. The marketing functions in this industrially oriented and generally oriented company were not able to provide the retail lock and the confrontation of this simply assumed headquarters that would be there to implement its well-designed program. A second program-level execution error is one i term bunny marketing. It does not stem from a functional inability to execute program plans, but from a lack of direction in senior management enforcement policies. A heavy manufacturing company was continually frustrated because it came out late with new products in an industry in which spare parts stocks and operator loyalties give the novice supplier a significant advantage. One of its products, a machine for special mining conditions, came out almost two years after the competition entered. The head office kept its fine development engineering team busy with a torrent of engineering projects, some to redesign machines already in the field, one to come up with an automatic prototype machine under government subsidy, and another to design the new machine. In a sense, the profusion of programs lacked focus because it stemmed from a bad sense of what the company was and what it was doing. The presence of many smart marketing programs —a great playbook—is often associated with implementation issues. This is because when a strong sense of identity and marketing direction are absent, programs tend to go in all directions. Such rabbit marketing results in diffusion of effort and random results. Systems: Bureaucratic obstacles Marketing systems include formal organization, monitoring, budgeting, and other overlaps that promote or indot good marketing practices. Systems can be as simple as voice telecommunications or as complex as profit accounting. Of the systems at lower organizational levels, the most problematic is the reporting and control of the sales force. Of Pervasive, those interested in allocating marketing resources and those who help management monitor results are bugbears in all except in some companies. Especially in smaller minors allocation systems cause many problems; in larger ones, control systems do more damage. Other types of systems as well as staff and formal organizational structure can also be problematic, but managers can often overcome these obstacles by exercising their execution skills. Three problems that usually occur at the system level are ritual errors, politicization, and unavailability. Ritual errors arise when the company's systems lead you down the usual paths, even when common sense dictates a different course. In a concrete producer, the marketing control system had a backlog measure of the plant. When delays were low, the sales force beat the bushes for jobs, no matter how marginal, estimators (who control prices at construction companies) scraped margins, and everyone from the CEO down got nervous. When delays were high, reactions were the opposite. As a result, the low-margin business taken in bad times made it difficult for the company to seek high-margin deals in better times. When the president accepted suggestions for a new sales control system to address the problem, he instituted new forms and reports, but refused to modify backlog management or address profitability by work as a means of more effective segmentation and selling. The problem of politicization is never more evident than observing the reporting and control systems of the sales force and, in particular, the call reports. Sales managers often released their call reports to suit their biases. Even more dangerous, call reports can completely lose their intelligence function and become a device with which to punish sales representatives who send the inappropriate. However, the politicization of systems is not limited to sales controls. In one case, division management at an equipment rental company chose to inform headquarters that its new pricing scheme would increase unit revenues by 11% and margins by 13%. He forgot to note, unfortunately, that the rental equipment would be obsolete a year earlier than the company had planned! The final, and more widespread, problem of systems is unavailability. That is, some systems designed to make life easier for line officers simply do not do so. In all but a handful of companies I've studied, for example, financial accounting and sales accounting systems can only be called perverse in not meeting marketing requests. One would expect that, in current managers of data-driven companies, they could make projections based on detailed analysis of the results. Few executives, however, have any idea of profitability by segment, cite an element. Rarer are still good numbers in profitability per product, and only once have I seen a system that allowed profitability to be calculated on an individual account. Instead, managers are either treated with mind-boggling, feet-thick feet-thick unaggregated data or else are informed in response to your requests that accounting will not give us in this way. The inevitable result is a kind of bell-jar environment in which it is impossible to make solid decisions. Policies: Spoken and Unspoken At the broadest structural level of marketing practice are the political guidelines. While policies cover the spectrum of administrative activity, I'm focused here on two especially important marketing implementation policies: identity policies —those related to what the company is—and management policies—those related to what it does. By policies I am not just referring to verbal or written statements; in fact, some of the most central policies for good marketing practices are not said. Identity problems are the most common political difficulties and, paradoxically, occur more often in mature than in young business units. The marketing theme and marketing culture are two terms I use to capture the powerful but often unspoken feeling of common purpose that the best implementers have and others don't. Theme and culture convey the company's identity policies. The marketing theme is a diffuse but significant term that refers to management's shared understanding of the purpose of marketing. In one company, some executives perceived themselves as heads of a commodity supplier with the only hope for the future to be blue sky R&D projects. Others believed that the company's main attribute was to differentiate its basic lines. Managers worked consistently according to their different understandings, and the result was a confusing and ineffective marketing effort —a sales force that thought the head office gave them contradictory signals, a divisive trade, and unhappy customers. In contrast, the management of another company and the entire sales force of 10,000 people could recite (with conviction): We are the leading supplier of snacks in the country. Our products are great. But we only have two seconds to get to the supermarket buyer, so we live or die in service. The shared understanding of management and the continuous reinforcement (through compensation, training and the like) of this theme, simple, though it seems, have promoted exceptionally effective sales performance and consistent customer reactions. It is tempting to dismiss the notion of promoting a common understanding of the company's marketing theme as a vague and insignificant idea. A test of your company's executives' perception of this topic may arouse some concern. To perform this test, write a single sentence describing the marketing essence of your company. Then ask your key people to do that too. The results are generally as instructive as The marketing culture is a broader notion than the theme. Considering that themes can often be verbalized, culture is the underlying and generally unspoken social web of management. It subtly but powerfully channels channels behavior in comfortable routines. Culture can be clearly observed from things like cafeteria conversations and mottos that management puts on the walls. For example, when I asked a company's managers why they were planning a $700 million factory addition to support a new product line that market research suggested would require only half that capacity, the vice president of marketing replied: We don't see much sense around here in chinning ourselves on the curb. Management policies refer to both marketing strategy and leadership. Although the marketing strategy is outside the domain of this article, leadership deserves attention as a fundamental aspect of implementation. It has become fashionable in corporations to blame deficiencies in practice in culture. It is undeniably true, however, that some of the top marketing managers are top leaders and others are not. The first inspires us with his eagerto go out to the field; they are smart in designing simple and effective monitoring methods, and their understanding of customers is powerful. Others are much less effective as leaders, immersed in complex conceptualization or reluctant to leave their leather chairs to market; they are inspiring just as role models of what their juniors hope not to become. The quality of marketing leadership has a far-reaching effect on the quality of marketing practice. In fact, of the business units I noticed had low caliber leaders, none had high-quality marketing practices overall. Whether a strong theme and culture are provoked by the charisma of the person at the top or orchestrated through memos is irrelevant. The critical question is whether these intangibles of identity, or who we are, and direction, or what we are, exist as powerful, though unquantifiable forces, that impose themselves on an observer in the same way that permeate the company. Bridge gap: Running skills Up to this point I analyzed the motorcycle without much attention to the mechanic. In fact, the main reason why good marketing practice occurs is that managers often use their personal skills to supplant, support, and sometimes quietly overturn inappropriate practical structures. I call this substitution of personal skills by weak structure a subversion toward quality. Formal marketing systems of malfunction are often corrected when managers who use them exercise informal organization skills. Similarly, informal monitoring schemes are often created to obtain data that the control system cannot, and budget reallocations are often designed to subvert formal political constraints. Managers bring four execution skills to the marketing work: interacting, monitor and organize. InteractIng Marketing work by its nature is to influence others inside and outside the corporation. Inside, there is a regular regular parade pairs over which the trader has no power to impose preferences; instead, he has to attack horse trades. Outside, the trader deals with a multitude of helpers, including advertising agencies, consultants, representatives of manufacturers, and the like, each with an agenda and an axe to grind. I noticed that those managers who show empathy, that is, the ability to understand how others feel and have good trading skills are the best implementers. Allocation The implementer must split the time, assignments, and other resources of all between the marketing jobs to be done. Capable managers do not have a false sense of egalitarianism or charity, but are hard and fair in putting people and dollars where they will be most effective. The less able routinely allocate many dollars and people to mature and very few programs for riskier and amorphous programs. Monitoring Is using monitoring skills that a manager can do more to rebuild control systems and degraded corporate information. Good implementers struggle and struggle with their markets and business until they can simply and powerfully express the back-of-the-envelope relationships needed to run the business, regardless of the formal inadequacies of the control system. Poor implementers either happily wallow in industry clichés or get stuck in incredible and often quantitative complexities that no one understands. The general manager of a company with 38 plants and 300,000 customers, for example, executed everything he considered crucial according to notes on two three-by-five-inch index cards. In contrast, the sales manager of a company about one hundredth of that size generated hand trucks of computer prints monthly in their monitoring zeal, then let them age like cheese. Organizing good implementers has an almost strange ability to recreate an informal organization, or network, to match every problem they are faced with. They know someone in all parts of the organization (and outside as well) who, by virtue of mutual respect, attraction, or some other tie, can and will help in every problem. That is, these managers rebuild the organization to suit the marketing work that needs to be done. They customize your informal organization to facilitate good execution. Often, their organization and the formal one have little in common. Good Marketing Practices Marketing administration is problematic in all but a few companies, and management's support is often restricted to some functions or programs within the marketing discipline. However, some of the business in my sample showed a really excellent marketing implementation, and it's the of them that there are some simple but important characteristics that differentiate good marketing practices: In the best companies, there is a strong sense of identity and direction in marketing policies. There is confusion and little disagreement managers about who they are. In addition, leaders are strong and capable. There is, in fact, clarity of theme and vision. The best implementers continually appeal to customers, including commerce or distributors, in many unusual ways. Customer concern is an ingrained part of the culture and is always highlighted in the theme of the best implementers. Interestingly, distributors are also seen as customers, and management has as main objective the maintenance of a partnership with distributors and end users. I call this behavior a profit partnership with broad definition. I didn't think good implementers are less profit-oriented than the poor; quite the contrary. However, managers who best at running take special care to see that end users also profit in terms of real value for the money they spend. Trade profits in more traditional ways, with dollar margins, but also benefits from having good implementers consider them as key accounts. Companies less competent in implementation never form a partnership with these two major marketing constituencies or, worse, lose the focus they have already had. In the best organizations, management is able and willing to replace its own skills with deficiencies in the formal structure. At United Parcel Service, the story is told with some pride from the regional manager who took over to untangle a misdirected shipment of Christmas gifts by hiring an entire train and diverting two 727s from their flight plans.1 When senior management learned of his actions, he praised and rewarded him. The culture supported replacing the skill manager by structure, but the regional manager was also ready for combat to defend his judgment. Finally, in companies that deal better with execution, senior management has a distinctly different view of the marketing structure and managers than bosses in other companies. In the best companies, without exception, the importance of executives dominates the importance of the execution structure. That is, marketing managers (and others) are the key accounts of senior management and are treated with a latitude not found in other corporations. Top executives at companies that are good at marketing encourage their followers to challenge and question them, as it is not always possible for those at the top to be right. Those who are poor in continuously following frustrate the tendency of policies and structure to become religion, which causes management to lose its flexibility in times of change.2 This process can be characterized as a common theme good leaders, poor followers. The main managers of the best companies also see the marketing structure differently. They tend to foster a philosophy of extravagance allocation with the choice of the program in marketing investments. It is not always easy to get new programs by these managers, but the plans that are endorsed are personal, funded and fully supported to maximize their chances of success. The total endorsement of fewer marketing programs seems to give these officers the critical mass they need to make the programs work at good times and bad and limits the risk to the company. This approach worked well for a commercial jet distributor I studied, which endured the recession of the early 1980s in much better shape than its more programmatically prolific peers. Once again, in the best companies, management focuses on one or a few marketing functions that promotes and feeds into a competitive distinction through expertise. When strong themes and culture, program pickiness and concentration at the function level are combined, the conclusion that emerges is that the best companies in marketing execution encourage soundness at the top (policies) and at the bottom (functions) rather than flashiness in the middle (programs). When all is said and done, quality in marketing practice is not a guarantee of good results in the market. There is a lot of luck, competitive jockeying, and total perversity of the customer involved to wait for this kind of predictive accuracy. Instead, good marketing practice means using skills to deal with the inevitable execution crises that blur customer and intermediary management strategies. Individually, such threats are not much to fear. Taken collectively, they're strategy killers. Killers.